



A Note from the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman:

Across Iowa, residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, along with family members, long-term care ombudsmen, citizen advocates, facility staff and others, will celebrate the individual rights of long-term care residents this October during Residents' Rights Month.

The annual event is sponsored by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (The Consumer Voice) to celebrate and focus on awareness of dignity, respect and the value of long-term care residents. This year's theme - "CARE Matters" - is designed to highlight the importance of quality care and its impact on the health, happiness and overall well-being of residents living in long-term care facilities.



In keeping with that theme, the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman has decided to produce four short versions of The Advocate this month that focus on topics related to residents' rights that begin with the letters C, A, R and E. These special issues will be emailed each Monday in October and will hopefully provide you with an interesting discussion topic for your weekly staff meeting, spark an idea for a Residents' Rights Month activity or just make you stop and reflect for a moment on the crucial role you play in enhancing the quality of life for all the residents you serve.

Enjoy!

Deanna Clingan-Fischer, JD

"E" is for Empowerment

As Residents' Rights Month wraps up, one question many long-term care professionals find themselves asking is how to continue to emphasize the rights of residents and tenants throughout the year. What steps can be taken to promote independent decision-making on an ongoing basis while fostering good relationships among residents/tenants, their family members and the staff?



One solution is to empower individuals and their loved ones to become more actively involved in how your facility or program operates by participating on a Resident or Family Council. These councils are independent, organized groups of residents or family members of residents who meet on a regular basis to promote and enhance the quality of life for all residents. Together, members create change, address quality of life and care issues, plan activities, discuss concerns and develop solutions.

While councils will differ greatly from one another due to the uniqueness of individuals who participate and their specific preferences and values, all councils exist to help members exercise self-determination and provide input on a variety of issues, including activities, meals, schedules, personal care and other aspects of daily life. They also serve to enhance communication and problem-solving among participants and facility staff.

Although long-term care facilities are mandated by federal law to offer and support Resident and Family Councils, many are unsure how to establish and maintain effective councils that empower residents/tenants while promoting a collaborative environment to improve quality of life and care. To that end, the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman has published [guides to creating and sustaining effective councils](#) that are

available to download from the Resource Library on its website. More information is also available by contacting your Local Long-Term Care Ombudsman at (866) 236-1430.

Upcoming Events & Learning Opportunities

The Call for Sessions for the 2016 Governor's Conference on Aging and Disabilities is now open! If you have a proposal that demonstrates innovative and effective methods of engaging with the aging and disability communities, we want to hear from you! Selected individuals will be invited to present at the Governor's Conference on Aging and Disabilities at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines on May 23-26, 2016.

This conference, sponsored by the Iowa Department on Aging and the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council and powered by the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD), will highlight the myriad ways Iowa's aging and disability communities are evolving and invite participants to engage in a thoughtful dialogue about the positive impacts of a society committed to independent living. Hurry - the Call for Sessions closes Nov. 9!

> [Learn more](#)

The mission of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of individuals residing in long-term care by investigating complaints, seeking resolutions to problems and providing advocacy, with the goal of enhancing quality of life and care.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to others who may be interested.

[SUBSCRIBE](#)